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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
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SUBJECT: UNREST AND TURMOIL IN CAMPS CREATE SUSPICIONS OF GOS
MOTIVES

REF: A) KHARTOUM 1659 B) KHARTOUM 1661

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Summary

1.(SBU) On October 20, the Governor of South Darfur announced plans to divide Kalma internally displaced person (IDP) camp into nine smaller camps outside of Nyala. Kalma Camp has been the site of rioting by majority Fur against minority Zaghawa African tribes, exacerbated by tensions between non-signatory and signatory rebel groups (chiefly SLM-Minawi). The proposed plan would separate the 92,000 IDPs that live in Kalma along ethnic lines and move IDPs closer to their areas of origin. The humanitarian community is extremely concerned over the government's plan to relocate IDPs from Kalma because it opens the door for non-voluntary returns and is not implemented in accordance with humanitarian principles, which mandate that new sites be assessed for suitability and that IDPs should be allowed to freely choose whether or not to move. The Sudanese Government has denied to us that this is their intention. A similar situation has unfolded in Hamadiya IDP camp in Zalingei, West Darfur, in recent days, leading many within the humanitarian community to fear that we are seeing the beginning of a larger relocation trend in Darfur. End Summary.

Kalma IDP Camp

2.(SBU) Following several days of interethnic fighting in Kalma camp, Sudanese government forces, repelled at first by IDPs, entered Kalma on October 19 and began shooting, burning structures, and arresting IDPs suspected of participating in the tribal bloodletting. The USAID-supported Justice and Confidence Center and other USAID partners' facilities are believed to have been damaged or destroyed. Deaths have been confirmed in the camp, but detailed figures are not yet available.

3.(SBU) As a result of the interethnic fighting in the camp, an estimated 30,000 IDPs have left the camp. Aid agencies report that

the predominantly Zaghawa sectors of 4, 7, and 8 are nearly empty, but 60,000 IDPs remain in Kalma camp, as of October 24. Between 500 to 600 IDPs are now living around the camp, an estimated 4,000 people have arrived in Otash IDP camp, and approximately 100 people have arrived in Al Salam IDP camp. Agencies estimate that more than 1,800 people are residing in Nyala town. Other IDPs are believed to be moving to neighboring towns, such as Mukjar or Ed Al Fursan.

4.(SBU) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Darfur have stated that they cannot take a position on the proposed division of the camp as that would further strain their relationship with the government and jeopardize their ability to continue to provide humanitarian services in Darfur. The UN is drafting a common position on the issue and has briefed donors on the situation.

5.(SBU) The lack of a camp coordinating agency in Kalma continues to be a problem. Kalma has not had a camp coordinator since November 2006 when the Norwegian Refugee Council pulled out of Darfur due to repeated suspension of their activities by government officials. Currently, the Government of National Unity (GNU) is blocking the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from expanding and providing camp coordination in North and South Darfur. Without a camp coordinator, Kalma camp does not have a focal point for resolving disputes in the camp, ensuring the safety of vulnerable groups, and liaising with the government on camp issues.

6.(SBU) The humanitarian community has raised concern over several of the sites proposed by the government for relocation because they are located in insecure areas making them harder for the humanitarian community to access. The GNU has stated that it is unable to set up new camps without the support of the international community. CDA Fernandez assured the Sudanese MFA that any unilaterally declared new camps would have no US support, and we are the largest donor. UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) plan to assess the proposed sites to determine their suitability in the coming days. However, the assessment has been

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repeatedly delayed. In the meantime, aid agencies may set up a transitional area in Nyala that would function for two months and provide services to 20,000 people. Additionally, an investigation is needed to determine the extent of damage to the camp, further risks for IDPs remaining in Kalma, and the motivation for violence. Medecins Sans Frontieres recently visited Kalma to provide immediate life-saving services. However, it is still unclear when other relief agencies will be able to return.

Hamadiya IDP Camp

7.(SBU) On October 20, a 10-vehicle convoy of Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) surrounded Hamadiya IDP camp, shooting guns and arresting some IDPs. This incident was triggered by the murder of an SAF soldier in the camp earlier that day. Arab militias surrounded the upper part of the camp. Unconfirmed reports indicate that four IDPs were killed and four SAF were also killed in the fighting. On October 21, the camp was reportedly calm, but increasingly militarized IDP youth had mobilized to patrol the camp.

8.(SBU) On October 23, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in Zalingei locality issued a letter forbidding all NGO activities in Hamadiya camp. The letter also forbids all humanitarian activities, except for water and health services, in other Zalingei-area camps. In subsequent meetings, the HAC indicated plans to move IDPs from Hamadiya into smaller camps in other locations.

Part of a Larger Trend?

9.(SBU) With back to back incidents in Haskanita, Muhajeria, Kalma, and Zalingei, many within the humanitarian community are wondering

if we are seeing the implementation of a larger strategy on the part of the government to break up the IDP camps in Darfur. In October, civilian casualties are markedly higher than in previous months, according to the UN, and displaced populations in Kalma, Muhajeria, and Haskanita have dispersed due to attacks. The recent fighting led 30,000 people to leave the Haskanita area and at least 15,000 to leave Muhajeria. The violence in Kalma has also displaced at least 30,000 people. While new displacement (for a variety of reasons, including fighting between pro-government Arab tribes) has been a steady trend throughout 2007, the recent escalated violence could be related to broader changes on Darfur's political horizon.

10.(SBU) One can only speculate what the causes of the recent upsurge in violence are linked to -- the upcoming peace talks in Libya, the deployment of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the upcoming census, or the Sudanese government's desire to strengthen their control over humanitarian operations. The implications of what we are seeing on the ground with the recent attacks, require further analysis to determine which groups are being displaced and for what reason.

Comments

11.(SBU) It is critical that the humanitarian community stress to the government the need for IDPs to be allowed to freely choose whether or not to move to the proposed new locations. Any new proposed sites for IDPs must meet all international humanitarian standards and any transition must not further expose IDPs to violence, exploitation, or health risks (Embassy makes these points to MFA and will continue to do so)..

12.(SBU) On October 25, CDA Fernandez raised these issues with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) officials (REF B). In the meeting, the MFA registered surprise and doubt that these incidents were part of a government policy and proposed forming a committee with the HAC to discuss the events unfolding in Darfur.

13.(SBU) While there is increasing ethnic turmoil among IDPs, rising

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crime, and militarization within these camps, these events should not mask or excuse SAF/GOS attempts at score-setting or disguised forced re-settlement of IDPs. End comments.

FERNANDEZ